



Addendum regarding:

The 2016 Certified Specialist of Spirits Study Guide, as published by the Society of Wine Educators

Note: This document outlines the substantive changes to the 2016 CSS Study Guide as compared to the 2015 version of the Study Guide. All page numbers reference the 2015 version. These items will *not* appear on Exams based on the 2015 SG.

Page 9 – the following was added to the information under the “Fermentation” heading: Fermentation may also create small amounts of other alcohols, such as *methanol (methyl alcohol)* and a range of compounds collectively referred to as *fusel oils* which contain small amounts of amyl alcohol, n-propyl, and isobutyl alcohols.

Page 17 – the following information was added to the section on Filtration: Many spirits undergo a process known as chill filtration. Chill filtration removes components common to many spirits that can cause a spirit to appear hazy or dull. Matured spirits in particular are likely to require chill filtration. To carry out this process, the spirit is chilled, which causes a haze to form that can then be removed. With all types of filtration, care must be taken to avoid filtering out desirable components that contribute to body and flavor along with those that are unwanted.

Page 18 – the following information was added under the “bottling strength” heading: Most spirits are bottled at 37 to 43% alcohol by volume.

Page 31 - the chart on the top-selling vodka brands has been updated to reflect 2015 statistics as follows (highlighted entries have changed):

Top Selling Vodka Brands	
Rank	Brand
1	Smirnoff
2	Absolut
3	Green Mark
4	Grey Goose
5	Skyy
6	Stolichnaya
7	Finlandia
8	Russian Standard
9	Ciroc
10	Ketel One
11	Sobieski
12	Eristoff

Source: *Drinks International (2015)*

Page 46 - the information pertaining to the PGI status of Plymouth gin was deleted, as the PGI was not submitted for renewal and has expired.

Page 55 - the second bullet point under the heading of “Definition of Whisky” has been updated to read: Distilled at less than 95% alcohol by volume (190 proof)

Page 61 - the chart on the top-selling Scotch whisky brands has been updated to reflect 2015 statistics as follows (highlighted entries have changed):

Top Selling Scotch Whisky	
Rank	Brand
1	Johnnie Walker
2	Ballantine's
3	Chivas Regal
4	Grant's
5	J & B
6	William Lawson's
7	William Peel
8	Dewar's
9	Label 5
10	Bell's

Source: Drinks International (2015)

Page 64–65 - the following entries were added to the list of Scotch Distilleries

- Highlands: Ardnamurchan
- Lowlands: Kingsbarn
- Speyside: Ballindalloch

Page 66-67 - the section on Irish whiskey was updated to read as follows:

Irish whiskey, traditionally known as *Uisce Beatha Eireannach*, is defined according to the Irish Whiskey Act of 1980 as a distilled spirit that must:

- Be distilled in Ireland from a mash of cereal grains
- Be distilled to an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% alcohol by volume (189.6 proof)
- Be distilled so that the distillate has an aroma and flavor derived from the materials used
- Contain no additives except for water and caramel coloring
- Be stored in wooden casks (not to exceed 700 liters in capacity) in Ireland for no less than three years

As of October 2015, a new set of technical standards was implemented in accordance with the European Union requirements for the PGI status of Irish whiskey. These standards expand upon the Irish Whiskey Act of 1980 and include the following regulations:

- Irish whiskey must be bottled in Ireland or, if not bottled in Ireland, it must be shipped off the island in inert bulk containers and subject to company controls and strict verification to ensure the safety and integrity of the product.

- Irish whiskey is not allowed to be exported from Ireland in any type of wooden container.

These new standards also provide definitions for the following types of Irish whiskey:

Irish Malt Whiskey: Irish malt whiskey must be made from 100% malted barley, with the wort separated from the solids before fermentation, and must be distilled in pot stills. The traditional practice is to use smaller pot stills in order to encourage complex flavors and a full, oily texture; however, there are no requirements as to the size of the still. Irish malt whiskey is traditionally triple-distilled, although double distillation may be used. Examples include Bushmills Single Malt, the Irishman Single Malt, and Tyrconnell Single Malt.

Irish Grain Whiskey: Irish grain whiskey is produced from a mash containing a maximum of 30% malted barley. The remainder is made up of unmalted cereal grains—typically maize, wheat, or barley. The mash typically does not undergo any separation of the solids from the liquids before distillation. This type of whiskey is continuously distilled using column stills. Irish grain whiskey may have either a light or a full flavor profile, depending on the cut points and other techniques employed by the distiller. Irish grain whiskey is typically used in blends; however, a unique single-grain, small-batch Irish whiskey known as Greenore Single Grain Irish Whiskey is produced by Cooley Distillery.

Irish Pot Still Whiskey: Irish pot still whiskey is required to be produced using a mash containing a minimum of 30% malted barley and a minimum of 30% unmalted barley. The remainder of the mash may be malted or unmalted barley, and may include up to 5% other unmalted cereal grains (usually oats or rye). The wort is separated from the solids before fermentation. This type of whiskey must be batch distilled in pot stills. The traditional practice is triple distillation in large pot stills, although double distillation may also be employed. There are no requirements as to the size of the still.

Irish pot still whiskey is a traditional product only produced by a few distilleries. Examples include Redbreast, Green Spot, and Jameson 15-Year-Old Pure Pot Still Whiskey.

Blended Irish Whiskey: Blended Irish whiskey is a blend of two or more different whiskey types, which must be made in accordance with the standards stated above, and which may include Irish malt whiskey, Irish grain whiskey, and/or Irish pot still whiskey. The whiskeys that make up the blend may also be chosen from different distilleries, ages, types of cask finish, and flavor profiles in order to achieve the desired flavor and consistency. Blended Irish whiskey tends to be smooth and mellow with a range of flavors, and a light, silky mouth feel.

As with Scotch, Irish blends are the most popular whiskeys in the category. Jameson, produced at the Midleton Distillery, is one of the top sellers, along with Black Bush, Bushmills, Paddy, and Tullamore D.E.W.

The Flavor of Irish Whiskey

Irish whiskey and Scotch whisky are often compared and contrasted in terms of production techniques and their resulting flavors. Being the leading whiskies of Europe and similar in some ways—such as the fact that both products are distilled from a fermented mash of grains, namely malted barley, unmalted barley, corn, rye, wheat, and oats—this is perhaps inevitable. However, the production of Irish whiskey is unique in several ways, leading to its own distinct styles and flavors. Some of these factors are discussed below.

Non-Peated Malt: Most notable, perhaps, is the use of non-peated malt. While both Scotch whiskies and Irish whiskeys allow for the use of either peated or non-peated malt, in accordance with tradition, most producers of Irish whiskey use non-peated malt. As a result, Irish whiskey is generally considered to be smoother and less “smoky” than Scotch. There are, of course, some exceptions to this rule. One example is Connemara Peated Single Malt Irish Whiskey, produced by the Cooley Distillery.

Grain Recipe: With the exception of Irish malt whiskey, Irish whiskey is produced using a combination of malted and unmalted barley—as well as other unmalted grains—in its grain recipe. The use of unmalted barley gives many Irish whiskeys a unique “leathery” flavor. **Distillation:** While tradition holds that Irish whiskey is triple distilled, modern rule of law does not have this requirement. Two styles of Irish whiskey—Irish malt whiskey and Irish pot still whiskey—must be distilled in pot stills but may utilize either double or triple distillation. Irish grain whiskey is required to be distilled in column stills. However, for all types of Irish whiskey, there are no requirements as to the shape of still, the size of the still, cut points, or other operational techniques, thus leaving a good deal of discretion to the individual distilleries.

Maturation: Irish whiskey is required to be aged in Ireland, in wooden casks, for at least three years. Many are matured for as long as seven to eight years before being bottled and shipped. The distillery may choose to use either new or used wooden casks, although used casks are the traditional choice. The new standards for Irish whiskey mention that the use of casks that were “previously used to store Madeira, Sherry, Port, or Bourbon” will produce a more complex and balanced spirit that will not be “overpowered by wood extracts and tannins.”

While once there were several thousand little distilleries sprinkled all over Ireland, at present there are fewer than a dozen distilleries in operation. However, with several new distillery projects in the works and rumors of even more planned for the near future, this number is sure to increase soon.

Page 68 - the following changes were made to the chart of whiskey distilleries operating in Ireland:

- Tullamore D.E.W. was deleted from the list of products made by New Midleton Distillery
- The following entry was added: Tullamore D.E.W. Distillery – Year Established: 2014 – Notes: Tullamore D.E.W. opened their new distillery in Tullamore (County Offaly), in September of 2014.

- The following entry was added: Teeling Distillery - Year Established: 2015 - Notes: A revival of Walter Teeling’s Dublin-based whiskey tradition dating from 1782, the Teeling Distillery is the first new distillery to be established in the city of Dublin for over 125 years.

Page 69 - the section on the evolution of American whiskey was revised to read as follows: However, the quality and reputation of some American whiskeys soon began to improve. In 1870, Garvin Brown, a pharmaceutical salesman (whiskey was sold in pharmacies in those days), created the first glass-bottled, sealed, labeled, and signed bourbon with a “quality guarantee.” The product was endorsed by a respected physician, Doctor Forrester. Eventually, the name was altered to “Forester” and the product became known as “Old Forester.” This type of packaging and endorsement became the standard practice and helped establish distinct brands and producers of American whiskey.

A few years later, E. H. Taylor, the mayor of Frankfort, Kentucky, and later a US senator, created the Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897. The law was passed, ostensibly, to ensure the authenticity of bourbon whiskey. The act mandated that to be considered bonded and labeled as such, the maturing whiskey had to be kept in a locked (bonded) warehouse for four years; be the product of one distillery from one distilling season; and be bottled at 100 proof. This law provided the government with its tax revenues (which, at the time, accounted for over half of all government income) and ensured the authenticity of the whiskey.

Although the mandate did not directly address the issue of quality, the assurance of authenticity with controls was sufficient for the consumer to regard bonded whiskey as quality merchandise. The terms “bonded whiskey” and “bottled-in-bond,” while considered to be quite old-fashioned, are still in use today.

Page 69 - the chart on the top-selling North American whiskey brands has been updated to reflect 2015 statistics as follows (highlighted entries have changed):

Top Selling North American Whiskey Brands	
Rank	Brand
1	Jack Daniel’s
2	Jim Beam
3	Crown Royal
4	Seagram’s 7 Crown
5	Black Velvet
6	Evan Williams
7	Canadian Club
8	Canadian Mist
9	Maker’s Mark
10	Wild Turkey

Source: Drinks International (2015)

Page 72 - the following information was added: The requirement for the use of the Lincoln County Process was specified in Tennessee House Bill 1084.

Page 76 - the following section on Indian whisky was added:

India is a large consumer and producer of whisky. Many of the best-selling whisky brands in the world are produced and, for the most part, consumed in India. However, the definition and regulations concerning whisky in India are not the same as those used by the United States or the European Union. As such, much of the “whisky” produced in India is at least partially made with molasses-based neutral spirits.

These molasses-based “whiskies” are classified in India as “Indian-made foreign liquor” (IMFL). This term is used to refer to all of the distilled spirits produced in India other than traditional beverages such as arrack and feni (a beverage distilled from cashew fruit). It is estimated that 90% of the spirits consumed in India that are labeled as whisky are actually these molasses-based products, which would not qualify as “true whisky” based on the standards of the United States or the European Union. The best-selling brands of these whiskies include Officer’s Choice, McDowell’s No. 1, Royal Stag, and Imperial Blue.

Indian-made foreign liquor may be flavored and may be blended with small amounts of other spirits, which often include imported Scotch whisky. These flavored products may be imported into the European Union under the category “blended whisky,” and into the United States under the category “spirit whiskey.” This practice is widespread and legal, although not without controversy from an international trade perspective. However, true whisky produced from grains and following standards equal to those employed by the United States and the European Union is produced in India and exported throughout the world.

The first producer to make a true grain-based whisky in India was Amrut Distilleries. The company, located in Bangalore, was founded in 1948 by Neelakanta Jagdale. After producing spirits based on a combination of grains and molasses for several decades, they released a single malt whisky in 2004. Known simply as Amrut, it was first distributed locally in Bangalore, and, after a positive response, was ceremoniously released in Glasgow, Scotland. This was followed by releases throughout much of Europe as well as Australia, North America, South Africa, and Asia.

The name Amrut comes from a Sanskrit word which may be translated as “nectar of the gods” or, as the company translates it, “elixir of life.” Amrut single malt whisky quickly became famous after being reviewed well by several well-known and respected whisky critics and publications.

Amrut Distilleries has continued to evolve in terms of production techniques and maturation regimes. Now produced at the company’s main distillery in Kambipura, Amrut is made from 100% barley, including some peated barley imported from Scotland. The whisky is double-distilled in large pot stills before being diluted to 125 proof and aged in oak barrels for four years or longer. Surinder Kumar, the master blender at Amrut Distilleries, has estimated that because of climate differences, one year of barrel aging in India is equal to three years of aging in Scotland.

Amrut single malt whisky is now released in over 10 styles, including those aged in ex-sherry barrels, those aged in ex-bourbon barrels, peated versions, non-peated versions, cask-strength bottlings, and single barrel bottlings. The distillery currently produces 4 million cases of liquor a year, including approximately 10,000 cases of Amrut single malt.

John Distilleries, founded in 1992 and located in Bangalore, also produces high quality grain-based whisky. The company, one of the largest distilleries in India, produces a wide range of products, including Original Choice blended (molasses-based) whisky. Original Choice is one of the best-selling whisky brands in the world, with annual sales of over 5 million cases.

In 2007, John Distilleries opened a new location in Goa and began to produce “true” Indian whisky. Its first 100% grain-based product, Paul John Single Cask 161 Whisky, was named after Mr. Paul P. John, the founder of the company, and was successfully launched in London in 2012. Paul John Single Cask 161 is made using 100% Indian barley. It is double-distilled in traditional copper pot stills and aged for three to five years in American oak barrels. The Goa distillery now produces several quality whisky products, including Paul John Single Malt Whisky, Paul John Single Malt Select Cask Peated Whisky, and a version aged in ex-bourbon barrels known as Brilliance.

Page 77 - the following chart was added:

Top Selling Global Whiskey Brands	
Rank	Brand
1	Officer's Choice (India)
2	McDowell's No.1 (India)
3	Johnnie Walker (Scotland)
4	Royal Stag (India)
5	Imperial Blue (India)
6	Jack Daniel's (United States)
7	Old Tavern (India)
8	Original Choice (India)
9	Haywards Fine (India)
10	Bagpiper (India)
11	Jim Beam (United States)
12	Ballantine's (Scotland)
13	Crown Royal (Canada)
14	Jameson (Ireland)
15	Chivas Regal (Scotland)
<i>Source: Drinks International (2015)</i>	

Page 82 - the last bullet point under the heading “Definition of Brandy” was revised to read as follows: In some cases, the name of the fruit may replace the word spirit on a label. Some of the products which may be so labeled include Mirabelle, Quetsch, and Williams (which may only be used for pear spirits produced using the Williams, or Bartlett, variety).

Page 88 - the following entries were added to the chart of Cognac Labeling Terms:

- Supérieur – Minimum of 3 years wood aging
- VVSOP / Grande Réserve – Minimum of 5 years wood aging
- The note at the bottom of the chart was revised to read: The XO Cognac designation, with a present minimum aging requirement of 6 years in wood, is expected to require a minimum of 10 years in wood starting on April 1, 2018.

Page 92 - the sentence concerning the grapes used to produce Chilean pisco has been revised to read: The main grapes used for making Chilean pisco include Moscatel (Muscat of Alexandria), Moscatel Rosado (Pink Muscat), Pedro Jiménez, Moscatel de Austria (Torrontés Sanjuanino), and Torontel (Moscatel Amarillo, a descendant of a País X Muscat of Alexandria cross).

Page 94 - the chart on the top-selling grape brandy brands has been updated to reflect 2015 statistics as follows (highlighted entries have changed):

Top Selling North American Whiskey Brands	
Rank	Brand
1	Emperador
2	McDowell's #1
3	Honey Bee
4	Old Admiral
5	Dreher
6	Men's Club Brandy
7	McDowell's VSOP
8	Paul Masson Grand Amber
9	Old Keninsberg
10	Christian Brothers

Source: *Drinks International (2015)*

Page 96 - the following information was added to the material on monovitigno grappa: The single-grape variety style of grappa was pioneered by the Nonino Distillery of Friuli in 1973, with the production of a grappa made with 100% Picolit grapes.

Page 98 - the following information was added to the material on Calvados Pays d'Auge AOC: Apples are dominant here; pears are limited by regulation to no more than 30% of the blend.

Page 98 - the information on the distillation of Calvados Domfrontais AOC was revised to read: This style of Calvados is distilled in a continuous reflux column still.

Page 98 - it was added that the term *Calvados Fermier* is sometimes written as *Produit Fermier*

Page 98 – the aging term for Pommeau was revised to read “a minimum of 14 months”

Page 99 – It was added that freeze distillation is also known as *congelation*

Page 110 - the chart on the top-selling rum brands has been updated to reflect 2015 statistics as follows (highlighted entries have changed):

Top Selling Rum Brands	
Rank	Brand
1	McDowell's No. 1 Celebration
2	Bacardi
3	Tanduay
4	Cachaça 51
5	Pitú Cachaça
6	Velho Barreiro Cachaça
7	Ypióca Cachaça
8	Havana Club
9	Contessa
10	Cacique
11	Barceló
12	Old Port Rum
13	Appleton Jamaica
14	Ron Medellin Añejo
15	Negrita
<i>Source: Drinks International (2015)</i>	

Page 112 – the introduction to the paragraph on overproof rum was revised to read: While most styles of rum sold in the United States are bottled at 80 to 100 proof, or 40 to 50% alcohol by volume, overproof rum has a higher alcohol strength. Most overproof rums are bottled at 62.5%-75% alcohol by volume (125-150 proof) or even higher.

Page 116 – the following information was added to the section on the definition of tequila: All types of tequila (including 100% agave tequilas) are permitted to be treated with “mellowing agents,” defined as caramel coloring, natural oak or Encino oak extract, glycerin, and sugar syrup, up to an allowed maximum of 76 g/L for sugar, or for a total of all such materials of 1% by volume. Tequila that is treated with mellowing agents may be referred to as “mellowed” or “abocado.”

Page 122 - the section on “Joven Abocado” tequila was deleted and replaced with the following information on “Oro” tequila: The term “oro” or “gold,” somewhat confusingly, means something entirely different when applied to 100% agave tequila versus non-100% (mixto) tequila. When applied to 100% agave tequilas, the term applies to tequila produced via blending young tequilas with aged tequilas. Such products are rare, but they do allow for tequila to be labeled as oro or gold and still maintain the 100% agave status.

In the United States, it is far more common for gold tequila to be mixto tequila. In such cases, the tequila is considered to be joven abocado. “The term “joven abocado,” which may only be used on non-100% agave (mixto) tequilas, translates to “young and smooth” or “young and mellowed.” It should be noted that the only difference between white and “gold” mixto tequilas is the addition of these coloring and mellowing agents.

Page 123 - the following entry has been added to the chart of 100% Agave Tequilas:

- Classification: Oro; Definition: While rarely used, this term may be used for a blend of blanco tequila with an older tequila; Equivalent Labeling Terms: Gold

Page 143 - the section on sweetness-level definitions for EU aromatized wines was updated as follows:

The EU regulations, which were updated in 2014, also specify finished sugar levels for aromatized wines:

- Extra-dry: Sugar content of less than 30 g/L
- Dry: Sugar content of less than 50 g/L
- Semi-dry: Sugar content of between 50 and 90 g/L
- Semi-sweet: Sugar content between 90 and 130 g/L
- Sweet: Sugar content of more than 130 g/L

Page 167 – the following section was added:

Infusions

In the context of distilled spirits, an infusion is a spirit that has been imparted with a specific flavor or flavors. Examples include blueberry-infused vodka, cinnamon-infused bourbon, or strawberry-infused tequila. Despite the plethora of flavored spirits available, house-made infusions are a creative way to make flavored base spirits which can then be used in unique signature cocktails or modern variations on the classics.

The infusion of flavor from herbs, fruit, spices, or other foods relies on two principles: osmosis, such as occurs as water flows out of the flavor source (drawing flavor compounds out with it), and dissolution, as flavor compounds dissolve in the alcohol and water of the base spirit. Simply put, infused spirits may be created by macerating a flavor source such as fruit or spices in a base spirit for a short period of time (usually several weeks) before straining. Most infused spirits are best when used within six months.